

SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN MARKETING CHALLENGE: BRAZILIAN BREWING INDUSTRY CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Goal: Understand the environmental impact of brewing industry activities in Brazil.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Discusses the model of production and consumption tied to the brewing market within the environmental debate. By bibliographical research, qualitative approach, case study. The case study data was collected within a three-month period on Ambev's sustainability program analysis.

Limitations: Enterprise's confidentiality. Some documents could not be reached.

Results: This study clarify that Ambev's sustainability program does not meet its own objectives and statements as it does not effectively contribute to sustainability.

Practical Implications: This article's value resides in revealing Ambev's greenwashing strategies deepening the effects of environmental crisis worldwide.

Originality/Value: This study arises a critical thinking regarding big companies sustainability initiatives lacking real environmental concern.

Keywords: Sustainability; Consumption; Marketing Strategy; Greenwashing; Ambev.



1. INTRODUCTION

In the globalized economy scenario, consumption is aimed at the economic development and companies' wealth, during commercial activities' growth. Globalization means that the world has become too small and consumerism has spread out in several countries. Today, we are talking about a global class of consumers, who consume the same products from the same brands in different cities around the globe (Gunn, 2012).

Consumption, which had as its main objective to meet the basic needs of individuals, has increasingly been associated to other purposes as well, such as providing the insertion of man in social life through the supply of desires for products and brands that make them feel in prominent position or belonging to a certain group, attributing status, validating their identity as citizens (Canclini, 1997).

Therefore, the symbolic construction of brands, in this sense, has a role of paramount importance in the consumers' mind: from this identity, purchasing decisions will be made. A desire for consumption is then created as an unfolding of brand fetishism, which occurs when it has such a strong force, capable of moving an entire productive chain (Fontenelle, 2013). In a world flooded by brands and products, companies survive through competitive value. Highly competitive markets support their strategies primarily by distributing and positioning their brands. Several marketing actions are taken to make brands increasingly more desirable.

In this scenario, a trail is then left by the exploitation of natural resources used in production. This vicious cycle of the "consumption society" makes product quickly disposable (Samson *et al.*, 2011). Then, tons of garbage is thrown into the environment, degrading fauna and flora, generating a serious environmental crisis. Companies, in turn, play a fundamental role in sustaining this market model, by constantly encouraging consumption (Silva, 2015).

However, in many companies, this environmental impact is not taken into account in productive process, causing great damages, often irreversible, as they devastate scarce and finite natural resources, ultimately affecting society itself. In the macroeconomic context, where profit is a priority and exaggerated consumption is encouraged, this production model is now questioned by environmentalists, scholars and similar institutions, propagating debate in society (Melgarejo, 2017).

It is now noticeable that many companies are presenting efforts to deal with environment or "sustainability" in their channels of communication (Hasna, 2007), as a way of positioning themselves as "ecologically correct", what is usually called *green marketing*. However, the understanding

of *green marketing* may vary depending on the viewpoint (Choudhary et Gokarn, 2013).

From marketing perspective, this is a jargon of the area itself, a specialty, as well as *sports marketing*, *cultural marketing*, etc. In this case, *environmental marketing* is seen in a positive way, because it serves the interests of environmentally responsible companies. However, if the analysis is carried out from an environmental perspective and if *green marketing* does not meet sustainability assumptions, it is only a way to green the brand.

Concern with the rise of environmental debate in organizations has led them to address these discussions and to disclose measures to understand that they will only obtain competitive advantage with a greener approach. Given this scenario, the Companhia de Bebidas das Américas (Ambev), a renowned Brazilian company in the beverage sector, proposes on its website four sustainability pillars to reduce the impacts caused by its activities.

Many companies use their digital communication channels as a means of disseminating their strategies, actions to environment preservation or the reduction of the impacts of their production, highlighting the term "sustainability". This occurs with the intention of associating brand image with environmental issues and establishing in the final consumer's mind the relationship between the organization and socio-environmental issues.

Given the relevance and urgency of climate change and environmental issues, this theme deserves to be highlighted and discussed in the Academia. In this sense, it is important to ask if those practices are truly sustainable, meeting human needs without compromising the environment, or if they are just 'greenwashing methods': a tactic to create a good organization image as "ecologically correct" (Atkinson, 2013; Chen et Chang, 2013; Cummins *et al.*, 2014; Matthes et Wonneberger, 2014; Parguel *et al.*, 2015).

Thus, this study presents the following question: "Are the sustainable practices advocated by AMBEV effective or are they only green brand tactics?" If AMBEV's productive activity, in its essence, cannot be considered sustainable, thus it will be insufficient to consider itself sustainable. This means that it is believed that the company practices only have green washing brand characteristics. However, although production process has characteristics that negatively impact environment, the firm can be considered sustainable if it is assumed that the company has nature damages reduction as a premise, as well as its effort to establish Ambev's four sustainability programs.

Therefore, the objectives of this work are: (I) Identifying sustainability strategies, such as environmental projects and

activities, promoted by Ambev; (II) Comparing those activities with sustainability principles and green marketing; (III) Verifying possible environmental impacts of Ambev's production.

This exploratory research and case study allows unfolding the above-mentioned objectives as a means of deepening the debate. The approach adopted was divided into three parts: (I) Bibliographic survey; (II) Documentary data or virtual survey of the mapping of Ambev's activities as object of study; (III) Ambev's case study for identifying forms of action, organization objectives, marketing activities, and operation dynamics linked to its current strategic positioning in the Brazilian market. Therefore, case study is used as a research method in many situations to contribute to the knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social and political phenomena (Yin, 2015).

2. SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN MARKETING

Environmental issues have been raised for a long time by environmentalists who have been warning public authorities, companies and society about the importance of addressing this issue. Noting the increasing discussion and studies on the environment, United Nations has been conducting several conferences at a global level, where authorities from developed countries that contribute to biodiversity degradation discuss their intentions until signing a document where they commit to environment friendly established programs.

The Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), published in 2014, is the most recent report and provides an overview of the state of knowledge on the science of climate change, emphasizing results since the publication of the Fourth IPCC Assessment Report (AR4) in 2007.

The AR5 confirms that the human influence on the climate system is clear and growing, with impacts observed on all continents and oceans. Many of the changes observed since the 1950s are unprecedented for decades to come. By incorporating the risk of climate change and adaptation and mitigation issues into sustainable development, AR5 also highlights the fact that almost all systems in this planet would be affected by the impacts of a changing climate. The Report therefore also focuses on the connections between these aspects and provides information on how climate change overlaps and updates other development issues.

Sustainability approach in relation to consumption lifestyle has been raised, debated and defined by several areas and different perspectives. In this aspect, sustainability from a marketing perspective points to a vision, where consump-

tion is encouraged, but worrying about the environment future, as Kotler et Keller (2013) point out: "sustainability consists of meeting the needs of humankind without regarding future generations".

Even with millions of people without access to essential products and services for a decent life, we are already consuming 50% more than the planet is able to replenish and we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 40% so that the temperature of the planet does not rise more than 2°C, a limit indicated by scientists to avoid major climatic catastrophes (Idec, 2017). However, as Lima (1997) warns, the "sustainability debate has already been established in an unsustainable society".

On the other hand, from a human rights perspective, where it is considered fundamental for humankind perennality on Earth, the environment is an essential factor for human life; more than that: it is indispensable for the existence of any kind of life (Sparemberger et Silva, 2013). Freitas et Freitas (2016) call attention to the relationship between sustainability and social welfare by explaining that combating human misery and devaluation of nature are its main assumptions, based on material structures and sustainable programs generating social inclusion, employment and income, improving people's quality of life with environmental preservation.

It is noted that sustainability definitions are presented in several fields of human knowledge and have some points in common, such as environment preservation and balanced environment safety for future generations. In general, these definitions refer to the environmental dimension (i.e. *resilience biology*), to the articulation between economy and environment (i.e. *eco-efficiency*, *green economy*) or finally to social equity. Basically, it is a matter of building a development model that allows nature to be conserved so that future generations can enjoy a balanced environment while ensuring that all men and women can enjoy a minimally dignified life. The concept refers, therefore, to the durability of mankind in conditions of social justice, in which all its members can develop their potentialities (Nascimento, 2012).

The sustainability debate enters into the social question and points to a civilization crisis, where individualist and consumerist values are strengthened, as well as power relations that are dominating and excluding (Sparemberger et Silva, 2013). An important step for sustainability to be absorbed by society is a new civilization process, where contributions of education, science and technology should accelerate the understanding towards sustainable processes (Freitas et Freitas, 2016).

From the increasing discussions involving environment, which mean the emergence of a new market segment, the

Marketing segment aims at serving this consumer through *green marketing*, as an instrument to develop and make public business strategies applied to environmental preservation and reduction of impacts caused by the productive chain. This interest in sustainability has also led to another term, *greenwashing*, which gives a sense of greener product, but which does not necessarily lead to its promise.

The interest in serving this new market segment has led several companies to act unfairly, forging sustainable measures in their packaging, or in advertising campaigns, which compromises the brand image leading to disbelief by the target audience. In turn, Parguel et al. (2009; 2011) theorize that consumers' confidence will decrease as more denunciations identify abuses and as they learn more about ecological issues.

Companies need to understand the urgency of changing consumer habits so that there is effective equilibrium in environment through conscious consumption. In this sense, one must deliver products that meet these sustainable assumptions. Gunn (2012) adds that "sustainability – understood as economic viability, social justice and environmental conservation – is today an essential attribute and that discourse is not sustained without practice".

Consumption x consumerism and citizenship

One of the great problems that contribute significantly to the aggravation of environmental crisis is consumerism. In consumption society, this practice means not only meeting individual real needs, but also establishing the sense of belonging in social groups, once obtaining a certain product or brand becomes a resource for identity legitimacy.

Consumption becomes the main source of satisfaction. However, besides being a source of satisfaction, consumption becomes the means by which individuals construct themselves as subjects, once the possession of certain objects indicates an assumed identity or not (Santos, 2011).

Modern and postmodern societies' lifestyle, through unbridled consumption, has contributed to serious environmental problems; thus, this model is environmentally unsustainable. Consumers still have difficulty in relating socio-environmental problems to everyday consumption habits (Gunn, 2012).

Irresponsible and unconscious consumption habits aggravate environmental crisis, once it incites consumers to acquire new products and presents new formulas, technologies and functionalities on an everyday basis. This short-term life cycle impacts negatively ecological balance.

Opportunities arise as recyclable materials management gains visibility, but little is done in this imbalanced scenario. In fact, what happens is that a marginalized and excluded part of society, whom lacks support for survival, ends up migrating, almost automatically, to garbage collection, creating a critical job for recyclable materials and income generation. However, there is little organization of this working class to obtain better working conditions. "The sustainable management of recycled materials can bring numerous benefits to cities" (Trigueiro, 2012).

Recycling brings several benefits to the environment and society: reduction of natural resources exploitation; reduction of soil, water, air and food contamination; saving energy and raw materials; improving life quality and cleanliness in cities; generation of new income and jobs; and ecological conscience (Santos, 2011).

People need to consume. However, it is fundamental that there is a reflection on this consumption act regarding its consequences on society, environment, economy, and individuals themselves (Mattar, 2012) so that, through conscious consumption, new patterns of consumption are established, effectively contributing to poverty elimination, social inequality reduction, and environment preservation (MEC/MMA, 2005). Therefore, these measures should be priorities for governments, businesses, and consumers, because everyone is co-responsible for building sustainable and fair societies.

3. DISPOSABLE CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT THREAT

Marketing appears as a consumer society mechanism centralizing their decisions on what, how much, and how to consume (Silva, 2015). However, within this unrestrained consumption perspective, there is an enormous difficulty in terms of decomposing materials, resulting from improper disposal, non-reuse of recyclable materials, non-valuation of waste pickers, and a lack of reverse logistics.

In this context, there is "a need to rethink consumption" (Mousinho, 2012), in order to promote a more balanced and sustainable environment. On a smaller scale, at the individual level, it is necessary to choose durable goods, avoid excess packaging, abandon disposables and take the shopping bag itself to market. On a broader scale, involving activities focused on goods and services production. Attention must be paid to the negative effects of this process on the environment, both in terms of natural resources usage and waste disposal of waste as well as obsolete produced goods.

According to Léna et Nascimento (2012), the expansion of economic activities linked to population growth and

technological progress, fomented by capitalism in a highly globalized world, where consumption plays a fundamental role, acted to stimulate this market model and are amongst the main factors responsible for the worsening of this environmental crisis. In addition, the speed at which natural resources are extracted from environment is disproportionate so that it is unable to recover.

In the face of these circumstances, one paradigm emerges between growth and the environment: the metabolism of mankind (destruction of ecosystems/biodiversity, consumption of renewable and nonrenewable raw materials, and garbage production and pollution) has reached such a dimension that it risks its very existence (Lena et Nascimento, 2012).

In the face of the increasing debate over environment, the awareness in terms of global environment limits (for instance, climate change) and the consequences of excessive exploitation of natural resources are essential for the emergence of new ways of thought and, therefore, the structure of a more sustainable society (Latouche, 2012). However, in order to transform the current production model it is necessary to question conventional economic models, which see the world with infinite capacity of support and ignore physical measures of natural capital and the transformations of energy and matter (Mousinho, 2012).

4. IMAGE CREATION THROUGH STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning consists of elaborating objectives that are intended to guide enterprises towards a successful marketing administration, which therefore requires certain capabilities, such as understanding customer value, creating value, delivering value, and sustaining customer value (Kotler et Keller, 2006).

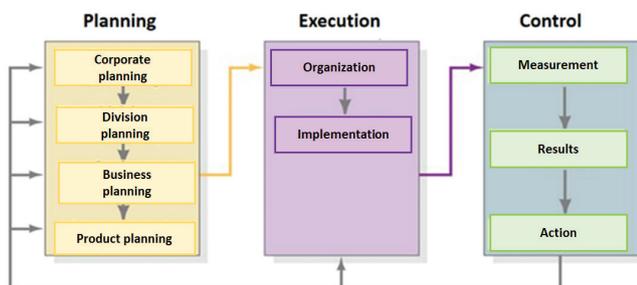


Figure 1. General strategic planning, execution and controlling in organizations.

Source: Adapted from Kotler et Keller (2006).

Marketing planning seeks to apply a logical and objective approach to deciding how the company's skills will combine

market opportunities so that the organization's objectives are achieved (Davies, 2014).

In order to plan for achieving the expected result, it is necessary to establish a process. Davies (2014) reinforces that developing a strategic marketing plan involves a series of interrelated stages of analysis, such as planning, implementation and control. Through the obtained result by monitoring marketing planning, organizations can review their actions and strategies in a way to reformulate them by positioning itself or rebuilding its image. In this way, companies use brand equity as a marketing tool to generate added value in services or products. According to Kotler and Keller (2006), this value can be reflected in the way consumers think, feel and act in relation to the brand, as well as in prices, market share and profitability that the brand provides to the company.

Within this context, several companies have presented measures aiming to make changes or readjustment in the market in their plan, using socio-environmental measures, reinforcing brand image for its consumers or stakeholders, thus trying to obtain competitive differential. Thus, for a significant change to take place, "corporate environmentalism must recognize the need to integrate environmental issues into strategic business plans" (Kotler et Keller, 2012, p. 83). Organizations' objectives are always in line with the socio-environmental debates and goals, thus fostering a more sustainable environment.

5. AMBEV AND THEIR "SUSTAINABILITY FOUR PILLARS"

AMBEV, a major brewing company, was established in July 1999, after the merger between Companhia Antarctica Paulista and Companhia de Bebidas das Américas, Companhia de Bebidas de Las Américas, American Beverage Company, acquired the status of the third largest company in the brewing industry and the fifth largest beverage producer in the world, significantly increasing its market share.

However, in contrast to economic growth and consumption stimuli, there is also an increase in environmental debates regarding production chains and the accelerated pace of the available natural resources consumption. In this new scenario and in the emergence of a new consumer, in line with environmental debates, organizations see the need to adapt their own business to this new public (Rahman et al., 2017) in order to avoid losing market share and begin to adapt their organizational strategies to this new context. Thus, measures and actions are adopted to meet sustainability. In this search, AMBEV adopts the creation of a Platform composed of the so-called pillars of sustainability: Intelligent consumption program; Development program; Water program, and Zero waste and Climate Program.

Intelligent consumption program

For promoting intelligent consumption, AMBEV proposes partnerships with universities, research centers, supermarket chains, bars, restaurants, unions, governments, transit agencies, taxi applications, sociologists, psychologists, health experts, artists, football players, digital influencers and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) intending to disseminate responsible consumption and the discouragement of harmful use of their products. In this sense, as can be verified in the official website of the company, these initiatives would be in line with global targets for 2025.

Development Program

AMBEV proposes social nature actions for transforming people and, specially, to encourage productive chain maintenance, aiming business lucrative perpetuation. It is of utmost importance that the company's development strategies effectively involve community by offering resources that enable not only the dissemination of business, but also generate benefits for society and, especially, for environment, since their facilities and production process can interfere in the social well-being of a community and in environment pollution, which can lead to serious social and environmental problems.

Acknowledging the impact of its activities, AMBEV launches the Development Program not only with the intention of promoting social well-being, but also of positioning itself as a socially responsible company. Looking for the dissemination of these goals, the following initiatives that would be related to its Development Program are available on its website: "AMBEV", "Movement for better football", "Maués - Guarana land", "University AMBEV", and "Zerrenner Foundation".

The Development Program objectives are intended to involve layers of society that have interests in AMBEV businesses; thus, from this relationship supposedly sustainable activities are promoted. This incentive, by analogy, could come through support such as those that bring benefits to football clubs, from the moment common fans become empowered as fan supporters, providing specific portfolio, as well as attending more frequently to club events, generating revenue and contributing to both businesses' perpetuation. A strategy aligned to the Development Program involves employees for social and environmental campaigns dissemination, obtaining, according to the company, approximately 40,000 (forty thousand) people. The company still reports sponsor academic training (scholarships) of employees and their children.

The program brings in its plan the intention of the stock split in the region of Maués in the Amazon, where the Santa

Helena farm is located. The municipality concentrates the largest production of guarana in Brazil. By preserving this place, AMBEV mentions guarana production enhancement and local producers training, in order to ensure input sustainability. However, the Development Program presented by AMBEV suggests a possible contradiction with regard to reducing environment damage arising from its activities.

Water Program

One of the most important programs for Ambev's business, undoubtedly is the one regarding water management. The challenge is how to use this common good throughout society in order to reduce waste in the productive chain, offering programs that contribute consistently to the protection of water sources, river pollution avoidance and the best distribution of this resource.

Given this scenario, the company launches sustainability programs and says it has been working for over 20 years to reduce the waste of water resources in its production sites. Henceforth, eight themes that propose measures to try to soften the water crisis, reduce the exaggerated expenditure on production, and make the distribution of drinking water more comprehensive appear. Among these eight items supported in global targets, the company highlights three that would be specifically aligned with the environmental conservation proposal:

- Reduction to 3.2 liters of water the necessary volume to pack 1 liter of beverage (goal established by AMBEV);
- Reduction of the risk of water availability and improve water management in key barley growing regions;
- Promotion of initiatives to protect river basins in priority areas.

According to data supplied by the Company, it says it has managed to reduce 40% of water consumption in 13 years. However, it is worth mentioning that the Water Program developed by AMBEV does not insert in its context the consumption of water used, for example, in the cultivation of barley, a raw material also essential for sustaining the productive chain.

It is important to note that the planting of barley causes a number of damages to the soil as well as to any agricultural activity that works in the monoculture model, such as the deforestation of large areas, soil depletion, and soil destruction through the excessive use of industrial fertilizers and agrochemicals for pest control, which cause irreparable

damage to the environment and are not taken into account in the above programs.

In addition, Ambev claims in its planning to have managed water reduction from 5 liters to 3.2 liters, in the production of one liter beer container. However, in the real industrial process, for one liter of beer production, an average of five liters of water is spent. According to the WWF, in a study conducted by the Mining Association of Environmental Defense (AMDA), the water used in barley plantations is 30 times greater than the volume used in the industrial process. That is, in total, 155 liters of water are spent for each liter of the drink.

Recently, Ambev, in partnership with TNC (The Nature Conservancy), has joined an initiative that aims to increase water security for more than 60 million Brazilians in 12 metropolitan areas. The Cities for Water Coalition, led by the TNC, intends to operate in 243 municipalities and incorporate the preservation of rivers and springs in the management of water resources. Finally, the Basin Project is an essential project within the Water program and its mission is to collaborate in the recovery and preservation of important watersheds in the country. One of the main steps of the Basin Project is the Payment for Environmental Services (PES) to rural producers. The intention is to offer incentives to farmers who commit to the practices of forest recovery and conservation in their properties.

Zero waste and Climate Program

One of the concerns of a company that use materials such as glass, plastic and aluminum as major sources for storing its products for the final consumer should be the given destination after consumption (reverse logistics). From this perspective, it is important to emphasize that the reuse of raw material has significant relevance since the residues resulting from consumption, when discarded inappropriately, entail a series of environmental damages.

Some of the possible damages are ocean and rivers contamination. This may aggravate public health problems, such as the incidence of *Aedes Aegypti* mosquitoes, the main transmitter of Dengue, Zika virus and Chikungunya. On the other hand, if recyclable disposable materials are not treated as problems, but rather as opportunities to generate employment and income, improving conditions for environmental recovery, then the discussion reaches another level and transform itself in a Strategic player.

In order to obtain recognition as a partner, it is imperative that initiatives be communicated, as these will provide them with a competitive advantage of adding value to the brand. AMBEV presents Zero Waste Program, which proposes mea-

asures that would contribute to better reuse of materials used in the packaging of its products, as well as “reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 10% (stated goal achieved)”, “reducing energy consumption by 10%”, “70% of refrigerators purchased annually must be models (Goal declared)”, “reducing the use of materials in the production of packaging by 100 thousand tons”, and “reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the logistics chain by 15%”. In addition, these objectives are still arranged in the program of the following actions: “industrial solid waste management”, “sustainable packaging”, “AMBEV Recycling”, and “energy and emissions”.

In this program, AMBEV states that it has taken important steps, such as: be accountable of recycling 100% of PET bottles (Guaraná Antarctica), using 37% of its energy matrix originated from biomass, having its greenhouse gas emission reduced by 10%, and improve 70% of their refrigerators’ efficiency. In a video presented by the company on its website, AMBEV mentions that most of its glass bottles are returnable and that approximately 70% of glass bottles used in beverages containers would come from recycled material.

“Sustainable Packaging” and “AMBEV Recicla” objectives still contain relevant data on raw material re-use: 40% of disposable bottles should be recycled and 88% of company’s products already present ecological characteristics, either through returnable packaging or through recycled material. AMBEV also supports dozens of cooperative institutions promoting environmental education, training waste pickers in voluntary delivery points, increasing recycling movement and more sustainable packaging, all in line with Brazilian National Policy on Solid Waste.

Since the project’s creation AMBEV contributed to a 13% increase in the income of organizations and benefited more than 1,300 waste pickers. In addition, Ambev’s project allowed performing more than 420 environmental education initiatives, impacting 45,000 (forty-five thousand) people directly and 900,000 (nine hundred thousand) people indirectly.

6. AMBEV STRATEGIC PLANNING

According to data collected by the consultancy Economática (2017), AMBEV is now considered one of the largest and most respected companies in the world. Therefore, AMBEV uses a variety of marketing strategies to pursuit its strategic positioning. A major concern is in innovation issues, as it is believed that a fundamental point to achieve business success is making available new products or new packaging for existing products by providing brand value differentiation.

In the quest to differentiate itself and attract its stakeholders, AMBEV, aware of the damages from its own productive activities, establishes a plan that minimizes envi-

ronmental impacts and settles several partnerships to meet those sustainability objectives. In order to communicate such strategies, the enterprise promotes in its webpage programs aligned with environment preservation. For strategic planning success, AMBEV seeks to improve its image through branding, providing brand status with a sense of being socially responsible, attracting public of interest by brand equity techniques.

7. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study started from the perception of environmental debate, which gained ground in the organization's global agenda, integrating their activities of strategic marketing positioning. The relevance of this discussion lies in the dynamics between forces that polarize interests: consumers increasingly educated and demanding greener practices versus companies eager for these same consumers' attention. Therefore, this work has the following guiding question: "Are the sustainable practices advocated by AMBEV effective or are they only green brand tactics?"

In the AMBEV case study, it was possible to find several company objectives aligned with environmental issues, for instance, water consumption awareness, environmental culture approach training, zero waste, etc. However, analyzing the material available, on the other hand, it does not yet fully meet sustainable assumptions, once its activities already have incompatible characteristics with ecological sustainability notions.

It is possible to perceive an effort in digital communication to promote sustainability programs; however, in contrast, this same effort is not perceived by final consumers. In this sense, it is seen that the positioning brand strategies would be directed only to its stakeholders. Although AMBEV has provided some achievement, they are still irrelevant to the innumerable damages caused to environment, resulting from its activities, such as: wasting of water resources, monoculture, disposal of materials that are difficult to decompose in the environment, among others (Morosi, 2017; Peci *et al*, 2017).

Sustainability programs established by AMBEV present green marketing characteristics where efforts consist only in positioning the brand image in a sustainable view, using communication mechanisms as a way of disseminating available content. Although some of the programs try to reach their objectives, they cannot be considered eco-efficient measures because they do not broadly promote environmental sustainability.

Analyzing the unfolding characteristics, this study confirms the hypothesis, considering activities developed as

measures for greening the brand, where the so-called sustainable programs are still insufficient to obtain this title. Therefore, such activities comprise only marketing efforts for brand positioning.

It is important to note that any type of business in which its productive chain presents characteristics, such as monoculture, excessive use of natural resources, mass production, packages of difficult or low reuse, and the non-accounting of natural resources in the productive path, presents immediately unsustainable aspects and high environment impact. However, the debate about environment impacts must always be present in society and at corporate level, so as to develop working methods capable of promoting solutions allowing a better use of resources.

This study is based on the understanding that the environmental debate, especially with regard to contemporary society consumption and production level, must be in the core of our attention. For such a change in consumption and production patterns to reach environmental expectations, it is critical to promote this debate at all levels of society.

Within the environmental crisis context, marketers are advised to present alternative solutions that meet environmental sustainability assumptions. Marketing, through its persuasion techniques, has a relevant participation in the purchasing decisions of each consumer; therefore, innovative and original campaigns are expected to obtain favorable results for environmental sustainability.

Another determinant aspect that can strongly contribute to damages reduction caused to nature is in the hands of large companies that adopt a series of actions, raising the environmental debate in the corporate scope and promoting the transformation of its employees; above all, its productive modes, which will consequently lead to significant changes in order to maintain a more balanced and healthy environment.

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